The Random Jottings of Donald Jay in Nelson in Pendle.

The restless spirits and ghosts of Gamleside near Burnley

In the depths of time, when the restless spirits of the past roamed the land, Gambleside stood as a humble village nestled in the northern reaches of Rossendale. It was a place shrouded in mysticism, where history and the supernatural intertwined.

Long ago, in the twilight of the Middle Ages, Gambleside thrived as one of the prized cow farms within Rossendale Forest. It was a domain of the Honour of Clitheroe, its fertile lands leased to Oliver and George Ormerode in 1507. The spirits of the land whispered their secrets to those who would listen, their ethereal voices echoing through the centuries.

The area encompassing Gambleside stretched from the meandering Limy Water to the southeastern hills, reaching into the depths of the Whitewell Brook valley. It was a place of enchantment and wonder, a testament to the untamed beauty of the land. In the ancient times, Gambleside was a part of the township of Higher Booths within the sacred parish of Whalley. Yet, as the world changed, so did Gambleside.

As the 19th century dawned, the mystical aura of Gambleside began to wane. The construction of the imposing Clowbridge Reservoir in 1866 brought a damming transformation to the village. The once-lush farmlands were constrained, and the vitality of the village faded. The village's decline was mirrored by its dwindling population, as families sought new beginnings elsewhere. The Ormerod Family, who had watched over Gambleside for generations, held on until the eve of the 20th century before relinquishing their ties to the village.

It was during these final years of habitation that the spectral inhabitants of Gambleside grew restless. The lingering energies of the past clashed with the encroaching modernity, creating a supernatural maelstrom. Ghostly apparitions were said to roam the abandoned streets, their footsteps echoing in the empty houses. Locals whispered tales of shadowy figures glimpsed among the ruins, their ethereal forms haunting the forsaken corners of Gambleside.

The village's history was interwoven with the spirits that called it home. The path known as the limersgate, once traversed by packhorses laden with lime, bore witness to countless spectral encounters. Travelers walking the ancient route between Clitheroe and Rochdale spoke of eerie encounters with otherworldly entities, their presence unsettling and awe-inspiring.

Gambleside Colliery, established in 1612, added to the ethereal tapestry of the village. It stood as a portal between the living and the dead, its darkened shafts delving into the depths of the Earth. For over three centuries, the colliery had drawn forth coal and secrets from the subterranean realm. Even after its closure in 1936, the spirits of the miners who toiled there lingered, their spectral presence intertwined with the fading echoes of industry.

Today, Gambleside stands as a poignant testament to the bygone era, a ghostly echo of its former self. The abandoned village and its restless spirits serve as a reminder of the power of history and the enduring mysteries that lie just beyond our grasp. As twilight falls and the shadows lengthen, the secrets of Gambleside are whispered on the wind, waiting for those brave enough to uncover its hidden enchantments.

By Donald Jay